



Accomplishments Report

Fiscal Year 1998

October 1, 1997 – September 30, 1998

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Executive Summary

The past year has been full of progress for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Although a significant setback slowed the prairie restoration program, other programs, such as volunteer involvement and environmental education, grew substantially.

The most significant event of note this year was the establishment of a ground-disturbance moratorium at Midewin, beginning in May 1998. The moratorium came as a result of uncertainty raised by the Army's documentation of the environmental condition of the 15,000 acres that had transferred from the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant to Midewin on March 10, 1997. Coming at the beginning of the growing season, the moratorium prevented additional planting. The prairie restoration program shifted from planting and weed-pulling to mulching and mowing, essentially deferring expansion of the native seed nursery for a year. Based on soil testing and analysis at the nursery and the Midewin administrative site, the moratorium was lifted for these two high-priority areas, but remains in effect for the rest of Midewin at the close of the fiscal year.

The development of Midewin's Land and Resource Management Plan formally began on June 26, 1998, with the publication of the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. Public involvement in the planning process this year included five open houses and nearly 70 written responses to the draft proposal for future management of Midewin, as well as 370 participants in 17 escorted tours to see planning issues firsthand. The process will continue in FY99 with public workshops to develop management alternatives and the publication of an environmental impact statement.

Despite the effect of the ground-disturbing moratorium on volunteer activities, the number of hours contributed to Midewin by volunteers increased by 80% this year, a phenomenal increase in participation. Volunteers played vital roles in maintaining the native seed nursery, leading the planning tours, hosting environmental education activities, staffing exhibits, monitoring native species and habitat, and maintaining and expanding Midewin's web site.

Midewin's involvement with local communities also increased this year. Staff worked with the City of Wilmington to evaluate providing a temporary home for the historic Wilmington Depot and to support its candidacy for the National Register of Historic Sites. The cultural heritage program also initiated a program to interview local residents to collect oral histories about working at the ammunition plant or living on the farms and homesteads that preceded the ammunition plant. Midewin provided informational exhibits and staff at several local events, including major shows in Chicago, the Illinois State Fair, and several county fairs and Earth Day celebrations.

The Mighty Acorns program arrived at Midewin this year. Sponsored by Chicago Wilderness, Mighty Acorns seeks to give urban students the opportunity to connect with the natural environment in an ongoing and personal way. Midewin sponsored classroom visits and field work trips for classes from four schools in Lockport, Crest Hill, Joliet, and Wilmington in the fall, providing environmental education and teaching the students to harvest seed from native prairie plants. The program will continue next year as the same students return to Midewin to learn more about the environment and perform more work projects.

One of Midewin's proudest accomplishments this year was its inclusion as one of the 12 Natural Wonders of the Chicago Wilderness -- a yearlong celebration of a dozen of the finest examples of the hundreds of rich natural areas found in Chicagoland and northwest Indiana. Midewin was included in a beautiful brochure and 1999 calendar designed to show the splendors of the natural environment in the Chicago region. Chicago Wilderness is a consortium of 76 conservation agencies and organizations pledged to work together to protect the natural communities of the Chicago region and restore them to long-term viability. Midewin's mission and vision enjoy the support of Chicago Wilderness and its widespread membership.

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Planning Summary

The Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) will set the strategies to guide all natural resource management activities and will establish management standards and guidelines for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie for the next 10 to 15 years.

Pre-Scoping Meetings

Public involvement is an integral component of the land use planning process. Prior to the formal launch of the LRMP on June 26, 1998, numerous site tours, displays, focus group sessions, and meetings took place with a variety of individuals, interest groups, and agencies to provide information about Midewin and the planning process. Public workshops were held on May 27 at the Wilmington City Hall and on May 30 at Joliet Junior College to prepare for the beginning of scoping. A facilitator assisted Midewin staff in collecting issues of concern from the participants, and comments were used to further refine the Proposed Action, a first proposal for management of the Prairie.

Public Tours

A series of 36 escorted public tours was conducted from June through the end of the fiscal year. The objective of the free tours was to develop an informed group of individuals drawn from the public and various interest groups from whom Midewin will expect participation in the public involvement process for the LRMP. These tours offered 850 participants a first-hand look at the former Joliet Arsenal lands and focused on the management challenges and opportunities of restoring the tallgrass prairie. Trained and experienced volunteer tour guides provided information on the existing natural and cultural history of Midewin, and participants were encouraged to become involved in the planning process.

Notice of Intent

On June 26, 1998, the Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Land and Resource Management Plan was published in the *Federal Register*. Publication of the NOI represented the formal beginning of the planning process for Midewin, and launched a 60-day public comment period for scoping issues of concern. The NOI contained a background summary, the planning criteria to be used to develop management alternatives, a description of management issues already being considered, and the Proposed Action, the first of several management alternatives to be analyzed in an environmental impact statement.

Scoping

The 60-day scoping period for the Midewin LRMP or Prairie Plan ended August 31, 1998. Five open house meetings were conducted throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, on July 21 in Wilmington, July 23 in Lisle at the Morton Arboretum, on July 28 at Governor's State University in University Park, on July 29 in Evanston, and on July 30 in Morris. These open houses attracted 69 participants, whose comments and questions were recorded by Midewin staff. An additional 66 written responses to the NOI were received by mail or electronically ("email"). A Content Analysis Report on all comments received during the scoping period is available on request.

Decision Support Model

The Midewin Decision Support Model is a computer-based program that uses the Geographic Information System to compare data layers and produce new information about topographic, environmental, and planimetric features on the Midewin physical landscape. The Model will produce new data layers that reflect the special interests and concerns of individual users. The results are then compared using ARCView 3.0 GIS with other data layers. Basic statistical analysis is performed and hard copy maps can be produced. The Model will be a vital component of the public's involvement in the development of Midewin's Land and Resource Management Plan.

FY98 saw the completion and implementation of the Decision Support Model and its installation on the Midewin computer system. A comprehensive user's manual was produced using a revised version of the metadata documentation, a data dictionary, and simple how-to guidelines on the Explorer and ARCView. Training sessions were held and the Model is now accessible to any Midewin staff. A strategy is being developed to achieve hands-on integration of the Model into the planning process.

The Midewin GIS Decision Support Model was developed by The Conservation Fund, the MacArthur Foundation, and Gannett Fleming, Inc., in cooperation with the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University. It was developed exclusively for the Forest Service and Illinois DNR for use at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

Timetable for Completion

Public participation in development of management alternatives will begin in May 1999. Environmental analysis of the alternatives will be conducted through early summer, and a draft environmental impact statement will be published for public comment in the fall of 1999. It is expected that the final environmental impact statement, the record of decision, and the final Land and Resource Management Plan will be completed by the beginning of 2000.

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Arsenal Cleanup

A significant event in the development of Midewin this year was the decision in late May to place a temporary moratorium on ground-disturbing activities. While reviewing the Army's Draft Record of Decision for remediating contamination at the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, the Forest Service identified a need for additional technical information about the environmental condition of the 15,000 acres that were transferred in March 1997 from the Army to the Forest Service to become the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

In 1989, the Army signed a Federal facility agreement with U.S. EPA and Illinois EPA to investigate and remediate the Joliet Arsenal. Among the many studies and other activities that took place, the Army prepared a Draft Record of Decision addressing the selection of a cleanup remedy and the establishment of cleanup standards.

Based on a review of the Draft Record of Decision and the Administrative Record behind it, the Forest Service became concerned that the cleanup goals proposed by the Army failed to adequately consider the future management of the site as a tallgrass prairie. The issue in question was not remaining contamination, but rather the uncertainty over whether the lands transferred meet the environmental standards necessary for tallgrass prairie restoration and administration.

While negotiations continued among the Army, U.S. EPA, Illinois EPA, and the Forest Service, a ground-disturbance moratorium went into effect in late May. Planting and weeding activities, removal of fence posts, and other activities were temporarily deferred. Midewin staff and volunteers continued to mow weeds, conduct escorted tours, inventory and monitor for native species, and other work that did not require disturbing the soil.

The Forest Service arranged for soil testing and analysis in two high-priority areas, the River Road Seed Production Area and the Midewin Administrative Site. These areas were determined free of contaminants on August 7, and the moratorium lifted. The remainder of Midewin is still under a ground-disturbance moratorium at the end of FY98, however a comprehensive sampling plan is being designed for testing and analysis on the rest of the site, to be conducted in FY99.

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Legislative Purposes

The Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 was signed into law on February 10, 1996. The bill ratified in principle the concept plan developed by the Joliet Arsenal Citizen Planning Commission and unanimously approved by the Commission on May 30, 1995. It established the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie as part of the National Forest System, under the administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, and designated four guiding purposes for management of this first national tallgrass prairie.

1. To manage the land and water resources of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in a manner that will conserve and enhance the native populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants.

Native Seed Production Nursery

Seed nursery beds consist of seven-foot-wide linear beds planted in sections with single native plant species. The width accommodates harvesting equipment for some species, although other species must be collected by hand. There are seed nurseries in three locations at Midewin – the demonstration beds at the administrative site, a small development along Chicago Road, and the main nursery along River Road.

Nursery work in FY98 began with the first harvests of native prairie plant seed in the fall and early winter. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. James Higgins of Hoffmann Prairie Farm in Wilmette, Illinois donated to Midewin over three million seeds of six prairie plant species, the research greenhouse at the Illinois Natural History Survey donated approximately 300 new jersey tea seedlings, the College of DuPage donated seedlings of white prairie clover, purple prairie clover, lead plant, culver's root, and butterfly milkweed, and the Chicago Botanic Garden donated over 100 seedlings of endangered or otherwise rare or difficult to propagate species. All will help increase Midewin's basic genetic diversity, and the new jersey tea and culver's root are species previously underrepresented at Midewin. By the end of the fiscal year, seed had been collected from over 40 prairie plant species to use for on-site restoration projects, an increase in volume and species diversity over FY97.

From December to April, the Bird Haven Greenhouse staff of the Joliet Park District helped grow about 200 plants of 30 prairie species to provide the "living prairie" component of Midewin's exhibits at the Chicago Flower and Garden Show and the "It's Wild in Chicago!" event. The 6x3-foot plot allowed us to show many people a small piece of tallgrass prairie long before the weather would have cooperated on site. The Park District donated the water, pest control, and electricity for the grow lights.

With the commencement of the growing season, Midewin focused on the maintenance of 7,500 feet of beds planted with 45 native plant species and on about 40 acres of prairie

grass seed fields. New development this year was delayed by the moratorium on ground disturbance, but after the moratorium was lifted for the seed nursery and by the close of the year, an additional 12 new species had been planted and another 3,000 feet of nursery beds constructed. See the following table, Native Plant Species in Seed Production Beds, for more detail.

A three-person horticultural crew was hired for a ten-week field season; one crew member was from Joliet Junior College and two from the University of Illinois. The crew was responsible for maintaining the seed nursery beds and for the temporary storage of nearly 3,000 trees and shrubs in pots during the ground-disturbance moratorium.

A shade house was constructed at the administrative site in August. The screening will protect plants until they can be planted in the seed beds.

Pest Management

Pest management this year included mowing, clipping, and uprooting Canada thistle, a noxious weed and serious problem in several spots at Midewin. About 200 acres were mowed to control yellow sweet clover, an invasive exotic plant. See “Grassland Bird Habitat Improvement” below for information on an Autumn olive removal project. In addition, a volunteer workday focused on uprooting garlic mustard from the Jackson Woods area behind Brown Circle.

Prescribed Fire

No prescribed burns were conducted at Midewin in FY98 because of adverse weather conditions and the ground-disturbance moratorium.

Prairie Remnant Discovered

Very little of Midewin consists of native vegetation; in fact, only about 154 acres or 0.81% of Midewin’s area consists of any kind of natural vegetation. Midewin staff made an exciting discovery this summer of an additional prairie remnant. Although small – only .22 acres – the remnant is unique at Midewin because it is upland black-soil prairie. All other black-soil prairie remnants on site consist of wet prairie communities; all other mesic prairie remnants are on shallow soils over dolomite, or on sandy loams derived from glacial outwash.

The quarter-acre remnant contains a good diversity of typical prairie forbs and grasses. When first discovered in July, some of the most conspicuous species included rattlesnake-master, big bluestem, yellow coneflower, prairie rose, and wild quinine. Later visits revealed the presence of leadplant, Indian-grass, and little bluestem. Midewin staff visiting this remnant in September were greeted by the violet-blue flowers of downy gentian.

Although it contains many conservative (intolerant of human disturbances) plant species, the remnant has also survived a long history of disturbance, including fire exclusion. Cool-season grasses (especially Kentucky bluegrass) and other exotics (e.g., white sweet clover) plus disturbance-adapted natives are common throughout. Considerable management will be needed to undo the effects of long-term fire exclusion. Fortunately, since the remnant is located at one end of a large hay lease, invasion by woody plants was controlled by periodic mowing. The haying probably prevented discovery of this prairie remnant during previous surveys.

This small remnant will be very important to the restoration process at Midewin. First, it can serve as a seed source for restoration, providing seeds that represent survivors of the original prairies of what is now Midewin. Second, it may provide sources of soil bacteria, fungi, nematodes, and other microbes which may be important in successful long-term restoration efforts at Midewin. Finally, this remnant has the potential to serve as a “core area” of natural vegetation, around which prairies can be restored.

Threatened or Endangered Plants

Leafy Prairie Clover: The leafy prairie clover, *Dalea foliosa*, is a state and federal endangered species found in northern Alabama, central Tennessee, and northern Illinois. First found at Midewin in 1997, the leafy prairie clover is a short-lived perennial that grows in limestone glades and dolomite prairies. It is the only federally-listed species at Midewin. Initial counts revealed a population of 87 individuals. With the discovery of two new sub-populations this year, there are now 145 individuals at Midewin. Volunteers are being trained to monitor the population, and protection includes caging the plants from deer browsing.

Eared False Foxglove: The eared false foxglove, *Tomanthera auriculata*, is listed as threatened in Illinois. A population of several hundred was known from a prairie remnant at Midewin. During the wetland delineation and wetland restoration plan work by The Wetlands Initiative another population of approximately 100 plants was found. These plants were found in another prairie remnant.

Glade Quillwort: The glade quillwort, *Isoetes butleri*, is a small nondescript non-flowering plant listed as endangered in Illinois. This plant is only known from Illinois from dolomite prairie at and around Midewin. A total of 5 populations are known in a several-mile radius. During surveys related to the proposed railway access land transfer with the industrial site more plants were found, expanding the population at Midewin.

False Mallow: The false mallow, *Sphaeralcea angusta*, is endangered in Illinois. The false mallow grows in a similar habitat as the glade quillwort and expanded populations were also discovered during the survey of dolomite prairie for the proposed railway access land transfer. It appears this plant can be found anywhere on Midewin where there is dolomite prairie.

Grassland Bird Habitat

Midewin has historically had some of the largest populations of area-sensitive grassland birds in Illinois. Many of these species are listed as endangered or threatened by the State of Illinois and are species of special concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Partners In Flight. Breeding grassland bird surveys completed during 1998 documented the continued importance of Midewin in grassland bird preservation in the State of Illinois and the Midwest. Midewin continues to provide important habitat for many Illinois listed species including the endangered upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), endangered Henslow's sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*), and threatened loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*). While the populations of upland sandpipers and loggerhead shrikes were approximately what they were in the past, more Henslow's sparrows were found than ever before, approximately 10 to 15 pairs. This population increase can be attributed to removing cattle from several sensitive areas and not mowing one hay field. During 1998, grassland management provided habitat for all three groups of grassland birds: short-grass birds, mid-grass birds and tall-grass birds.

Although population numbers of grassland birds are being maintained, there is the likelihood of population declines in the future because of habitat loss to the adjacent industrial parks, veterans cemetery and county landfill. Besides the loss from these sources, the lack of fences between Midewin and Army inholdings has decreased the amount of grazing available to provide short-grass habitat. To offset these problems, crop fields are being converted to cool-season grasses and clover as a temporary measure until prairie restoration can get started. During 1998, 120 acres were planted in cool-season grasses to provide grassland bird habitat. Also, an agreement was signed with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to transfer \$25,000 for the purchase of grass and clover seed to plant an additional 350 acres of cropland to grassland habitat.

Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), an exotic shrub, was controlled by working with the lessee from one of the old Army leases. The Army had specified that an area of trees were to be bulldozed out. This area had prairie plants growing near the trees and removal of the trees needed to be done in a more sensitive manner. The lessee agreed to mow the Autumn olive in another portion of the lease, approximately 150 acres. The mowed area had historically had some of the highest numbers of Illinois endangered upland sandpiper nests at Midewin. The Autumn olive was making this area uninhabitable for the upland sandpipers. The mowing of this area will again make the area favorable for upland sandpipers as well as other grassland birds that need short-grass habitat with no woody vegetation.

Plains Leopard Frog Discovered

Midewin has been fortunate to have had extensive amphibian and reptile surveys that date back well into the Joliet Arsenal era. Since 1993, amphibian surveys and Midewin staff have captured and handled hundreds of Northern leopard frogs (*Rana pipiens*) on site, but not until mid-September 1998 was a Plains leopard frog (*Rana blairi*) found at Midewin. The sole *Rana blairi* was found on a road in the west side of the site during a nighttime rain shower. It was photographed and released. Attempts to find additional Plains leopard frogs have been unsuccessful.

To the untrained eye, the Plains leopard frog looks very similar to related leopard frogs, and was not even recognized as a distinct species until the 1970s. The most distinctive characteristic of *Rana blairi* is a broken pair of skin folds on the sides of the frog's back. This contrasts with the Northern leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*), which has folds continuous along the sides of its back.

As its common name implies, *Rana blairi* is a frog whose range is primarily in the Great Plains, where it occupies large portions of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. In Illinois, it enters from the west and occupies a belt across the center of the state (the former "Prairie Peninsula") and just barely into western Indiana. In the Chicago area, *Rana blairi* is at the northeastern periphery of its range, and it is known only from Will County, where it is rare.

The reasons for the rarity of this species at Midewin are not known. It is very unusual for continued surveys to find just one frog – this applies even to endangered and threatened species. Whatever the reason for its rarity, the presence of the Plains leopard frog at Midewin probably is due to the extensive grassland habitat here. Perhaps the site has always served as a refuge for a small population. As the restoration at Midewin proceeds, it will be interesting to see if the Plains leopard frog population increases.

SOAR Release Program

Save Our American Raptors is an organization dedicated to the rehabilitation of and education about birds of prey. Based out of Naperville, Illinois, SOAR is organized and operated solely by volunteers. In 1998, as part of its airport raptor removal and relocation program, SOAR released four red-tailed hawks and seven American kestrels at Midewin.

This program began in February 1996 when SOAR was contacted by USDA Animal Damage Control biologists at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago for advice on nonlethal methods of removing raptors. The airport was overrun with rough-legged hawks, snowy owls, red-tailed hawks, short-eared owls, American kestrels, and peregrines, many of whom were found dead on the tarmac. O'Hare's 7,000 acres include large tracts of grassland and wooded habitat and a 100-acre lake which attract wildlife and birds.

SOAR designed a pilot “raptor removal and relocation project.” They trained USDA airport personnel in the construction and use of humane capture devices, and in raptor handling techniques. A SOAR intern was installed to oversee and assist in the project. The purpose of the program was to remove resident and migrating birds of prey to 1) prevent raptor injuries and fatalities from aircraft strikes, 2) prevent air accidents with potential for loss of life or property, 3) reduce incidents of engine damage due to ingestion of birds, and 4) conduct a study to determine the minimum release distance required to prevent the birds’ return to the airport.

After the raptors are captured, they are transported to SOAR and given physical examinations and medical attention, if needed. Their age, weight, physical condition, and gender are recorded for future studies. All healthy birds are then banded with USFWS numbered aluminum bands and are driven a prescribed distance away from the airport for release in appropriate habitat. Midewin is one of three release study sites, and also provides monitoring information on banded birds which may be found dead or injured after release. Several sites are used for release to avoid saturating one habitat with too many predatory birds.

Since March 1996, 85 raptors have been removed from O’Hare and released at three sites. Midway Airport joined the removal project in August 1998 and SOAR relocated five raptors from this facility. Of the 90 birds removed, only one bird (a kestrel) returned to O’Hare in 1996. Another hawk, removed from O’Hare in 1997, was found dead at Midway Airport in Fall 1998. In 1997, SOAR released two O’Hare red-tailed hawks at Midewin. In 1998, SOAR released four red-tailed hawks and seven American kestrels at Midewin. Midewin will continue to support this raptor removal and relocation project.

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Legislative Purposes

2. To provide opportunities for scientific, environmental, and land use education and research.

Youth Conservation Corps

The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is a summer employment program for young men and women ages 15 through 18 from all segments of society, who work, learn, and earn together by doing projects on public lands. The YCC program is intended to further the development and maintenance of the natural resources of the country by its youth, and, in so doing to prepare them for the ultimate responsibility of maintaining these resources for the American people. This is accomplished in a manner which provides the youth with an opportunity to acquire increased self-dignity and self-discipline. They learn work ethics, how to relate to peers and supervisors, and how to build lasting cultural bridges with youth from other backgrounds. An important element of the YCC program is the requirement that participants spend a portion of each day engaged in structured environmental learning activities related to their work projects. While accomplishing needed resource work, the YCC program contributes to Midewin's goal of providing opportunities for research and education.



Midewin's 1998 YCC crew was made up of eight high school students recruited from Wilmington High School. This was an increase of two enrollees over the 1997 program and included one returnee from the 1997 crew. The program ran for eight weeks, from June 8 to July 31. The crew was made up of five males and three females. We achieved our target of 56 enrollee weeks.

Many thanks to Johanna Biskie (2nd-year Youth Leader), Joshua Bengé, Matt Crutchfield, Kerry Hughes, Stephanie Peters, Michelle Riggs, Scott Shell, and Tim Stacy for their hard work on the 1998 YCC crew. Their accomplishments include:

- Roadside and fenceline clearing along Central Road.
- Trail construction to provide access to two universal access hunting blinds.
- Seed Production Nursery work site clearing and brush removal.
- Boat House Road fenceline clearing.
- Seed bed mulching at the River Road Seed Production Area.
- Removal of old fence along Central Road.
- Bird habitat monitoring and mapping using GPS/GIS systems.
- Autumn olive control.
- Development of simple interpretive signs for the Seed Production Area.
- Construction of livestock exclusion fencing.

These projects have a value of \$26,000. This is a decrease from the 1997 level of accomplishment for the YCC program because the deferral of ground-disturbing activities prevented the crew from carrying out many of their planned projects.

Mighty Acorns Project

The Mighty Acorns Youth Stewardship Education Program seeks to introduce youth in the Chicago metropolitan area to nature through stewardship and exploration in a way that fosters a personal connection to natural areas. Mighty Acorns involves urban third- through ninth-graders in the exploration of natural areas, hands-on stewardship projects, and other direct experiences in the prairies, woodlands, and wetlands of the Chicago area. Volunteers and teachers lead students in small groups (5-6 students) in their field experiences.

Stewardship activities include native seed collecting and planting, as well as removing non-native or invasive plants and brush. The students' connection with nature is strengthened by their developing relationship as stewards of the site. Three seasonal field visits provide additional opportunities to deepen the connection by investigating an "adopted" site over the course of the year.



Mighty Acorns staff and volunteers collaborate with teachers to relate stewardship experiences with classroom lessons. Teachers may develop projects in art, writing, science, or history that grow out of the field experience. The partnership Mighty Acorns creates with schools allows teachers to explore the use of natural areas for curricular projects, service projects, and the social development of children in their classes.

The Nature Conservancy's Chicago office created the Mighty Acorns program in 1993 for urban Cook County students. Today, Mighty Acorns is a partnership of Chicago Wilderness, and involves 2,500 children annually from dozens of schools and youth organizations throughout the Chicago metropolitan area.

In 1998, a grant allowed the program to expand beyond Cook County, and Midewin began hosting prairie restoration projects for four schools – 125 fourth-graders from Booth Central School in Wilmington, 78 fifth-graders from Hadley School in Lockport, 97 seventh- and eighth-graders from Chaney-Monge School in Crest Hill, and 75 seventh-graders from Hufford Junior High School in Joliet. Fall activities included classroom orientations for students, teachers, and parent volunteers, followed by field trips for educational games, bird watching, and collecting a significant amount of seed from the Midewin nursery beds for planting next spring. A group of 18 Midewin volunteers have been trained to lead and support Mighty Acorns activities and they are vital to Midewin's ability to host the schools. The program will continue with winter and spring sessions for each class.

Research Projects

Research projects conducted at Midewin in FY98 include:

- Joliet Arsenal Prairie Project.** Jim Herkert, Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board and Scott Robinson, University of Illinois. Completed in September 1998. This breeding bird research project studied grassland areas primarily within the Prairie Parklands with a special emphasis on Midewin. The objectives of the project were:
- 1) Establish baseline data for grassland bird populations at the major study areas,
 - 2) Establish baseline nest success rates for grassland bird populations at the major study areas,
 - 3) Compare the suitability of native prairie, restored prairie, and non-prairie grasslands for grassland bird conservation efforts,
 - 4) Evaluate impacts of common grassland management practices on grassland bird abundance and productivity,
 - 5) Assess the effects of woody vegetation on grassland bird abundance and productivity,
 - 6) Evaluate the impacts of edges on grassland bird abundance and productivity, and
 - 7) Evaluate the influence of landscape attributes on grassland bird productivity.

Identification of Large Grassland Ecosystems in Illinois. Illinois Natural History Survey. This study attempted to find the large tracts of grassland remaining in Illinois by the use of GIS technology. Although this research wasn't geared primarily to Midewin, the results are significant in regards to Midewin. The largest amount of grassland in Illinois occurred in Will County for the large tract categories and the largest single tract in the state was identified as Midewin.

Bell's vireo study. Chris Whelan, Illinois Natural History Survey, Team Midewin. Bell's vireo is on the Illinois "watch" list and is a species for which Midewin needs a habitat suitability index model. The approximate territories were determined for 17 pairs of vireos and 24 nest attempts were found and documented. Vegetation characteristics of the territories and nest sites will be quantified. Results show a minimum of 34 pairs of Bell's vireo occupying the west side of Midewin.

Inventory and assessment of remnant-dependent jumping spiders of Midewin. University of St. Francis. Quantitative sampling conducted in 1998. A surprising diversity of jumping spiders was found. Illinois has about 68+ species, found mostly in southern Illinois – half of these species were found at Midewin, including four remnant-dependent species.

Biology of the apple maggot/haw fly, *Rhagoletis pommonela*. Stewart Berlocher and Karla Ramsdell, Department of Entomology, University of Illinois – Champaign – Urbana.

Landscape patterns and diversity of non-volant mammals along an urban-rural gradient. John Yunger, Governor's State University.

Outbreeding depression in two *Lobelia* species at Chicago Botanic Garden and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Kayri Havens, Chicago Botanic Garden.

Reproductive biology of *Lobelia siphilitica*. Dana Dudle, University of Indiana. This study will not continue because of cattle grazing.

Development of a biological profile of dolomite prairie in the lower Des Plaines river valley to use in restoring natural plant communities on Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The Wetlands Initiative.

A study of intraspecific brood parasitism and extra-pair copulation in American Robins and Wood Thrush at Morton Arboretum and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Matthew Horning, State University of New York – Buffalo. This project will not continue.

In addition, Midewin supported and participated in the 1998 Midwestern Rare Plants Conference presented at the Chicago Botanic Garden in November 1998. Over 100 professionals in plant science and conservation attended and focused on rare plant research and restoration.

Inventories

Approximately 10 volunteers and Midewin staff participated in the May 9, 1998 Annual Migratory Bird Count at Midewin.

A volunteer bird monitoring program began at Midewin in FY98. Initially, three volunteers conducted bird censuses in one field at six permanent points. This small start will be evaluated and lessons applied to an expanded program in FY99.

Midewin staff monitored ten loggerhead shrike nests over a six-week period, twice monitored 35 points in three fields covering 800 acres for the Breeding Grasslands Birds Survey, and spent eight days trapping and censusing turtles.

Nine points were established for bird censuses along Prairie Creek on the west side of Midewin. This is an area that appears to have been savanna historically, but now is weedy woodland. The use of these woods by birds will be documented so that avifauna responses to restoration can be predicted.

Midewin Web Site

The Midewin Web Site is a key element of Midewin's education and outreach program. Newspaper reporters log onto it for background information, undergraduate students use data from the Web site for research reports, and citizens have become involved in the planning process and have become volunteers after browsing the site. The Forest Service webmaster ranked Midewin's Web site quality among the top 30% of web sites on the headquarters server.

Midewin's web site was created and is managed by volunteer Wendy Liles. Using her expertise as a professional Web site developer, Wendy updates and improves the site on a regular basis, integrating artwork and photos, promoting the site, and setting up links with other relevant sites. Information on the Web site has prompted an increasing number of information requests via email, expanding the avenues available for Midewin to communicate with its national audience. The latest data indicate that the site receives nearly 350 visits a month. The address for Midewin's Web site is <http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp>.

Heritage Resources

Wilmington Depot: The Forest Service worked with the City of Wilmington to prepare documentation needed to move the historic Wilmington Depot building to a temporary location at Midewin. Possible long-term locations would be identified and analyzed through the Land and Resource Management Plan.

Passport in Time: The 1998 Passport in Time (PIT) was cancelled as a result of the ground-disturbance moratorium. PIT is a Forest Service volunteer program that invites the public to participate in archaeological and historical projects on various national forest lands throughout the country. Midewin plans to schedule another PIT project in 1999.

Oral Histories: During the summer of 1998, the Forest Service hired a university student to conduct interviews with former Joliet Arsenal employees and pre-Arsenal landowners. The oral history program will continue through the use of student interns.

FY98 Accomplishments Report

Legislative Purposes

3. To allow the continuation of agricultural uses of lands within the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie consistent with [the terms and conditions detailed in] section 2915(b).

Consistent with the vision of restoring a tallgrass prairie at Midewin, this part of the legislative purpose intends that agricultural leasing shall be gradually phased out at Midewin as the prairie returns. As each agricultural lease expires, a careful evaluation is made as to whether this piece of Midewin is ready for a change. In most cases, the land is being returned to agricultural use, since row crops and hay prevent invasive weeds from taking over and even provide good habitat for some resident bird species. In some areas, continued cattle grazing maintains good habitat for birds that require large expanses of short grass.

Agricultural Use	FY98 Acres
Alfalfa	229.71
Corn	2,262.75
Oats/Alfalfa	66.19
Soybeans	2,933.71
Hay	933.84
Grazing	2,604.37

In FY98, 9,037 acres at Midewin were leased for agricultural purposes. Of the total lands leased, row crops comprised 5,492 acres, or 61% of the total lands leased; hay comprised 934 acres, or 10%; and grazing comprised 2,604 acres, or 29%.

Revenues generated by agricultural leasing in FY98 were \$657,676.16. By federal law, 25% of the revenues collected by the Forest Service for the use of national forest system lands and resources is returned to the states where the lands are located. The states in turn redistribute the funds to the counties, which are required to use the funds for roads and schools.

The 25% Fund is paid in two installments. Revenues are calculated using the federal fiscal year, from October 1 through September 30. In October of each year, an interim payment of 75% of the total estimated revenues for the fiscal year will be made to the states. Any additional funds are paid to the states in December, after determining the final receipts for the fiscal year that ended September 30.

For Midewin revenues, the U.S. Treasury checks are received by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and distributed by IDNR to Will County in January of each year.

Half of the payment is to be spent on roads, and the other half to be split proportionately between the Wilmington and Elwood school districts.

FY98 Accomplishments Report

Legislative Purposes

4. To provide a variety of recreation opportunities that are not inconsistent with the preceding purposes.

Recreation opportunities at Midewin remain restricted by the continuing cleanup of contamination of the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant. Development of permanent facilities in support of recreation activities awaits the completion of the Land and Resource Management Plan. Accomplishments in the recreation program for FY98 are primarily in planning and preparing for future activities.

Recreation Fee Demonstration Program

Recreation fees at Midewin may be charged under two different authorizations. One is a national Recreation Fee Demonstration Program, and the other is contained in Midewin's establishing legislation.

- The Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriation Act of 1996 (PL 104-134) and the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY97 (PL 104-208) provided the authority to the Forest Service, as well as the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to charge recreation fees under a Recreation Fee Demonstration pilot program. The goal of the pilot was to demonstrate the feasibility of user-generated cost recovery for the operation and maintenance of recreation sites and for the improvement of wildlife habitat. Fees collected under this program would be spent on site, rather than being returned to the U.S. Treasury for appropriation by Congress. The program was authorized through September 30, 1999, at which time the results would be evaluated.
- The Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 (PL 104-106) directs the Secretary of Agriculture to include Midewin in any cost recovery program the Department of Agriculture develops for the collection, use, and distribution of user fees.

In FY98, Midewin prepared to begin charging fees under the Recreation Fee Demonstration pilot program for deer hunting in the fall of 1998, and for future recreational activities as they become available on site. The Business and Communications plans were completed and approved. Recreation passes were designed and printed.

In the first phase of the Recreation Fee Demonstration pilot, both archery and deer hunters would be required to purchase either an annual pass for \$15.00 or a day pass for \$3.00 to enter Midewin for hunting. Sale of the passes to hunters with a valid hunting license began in September 1998 in preparation for hunting later in the fall. Signs were placed at two hunter parking lots along River Road recognizing the contribution of the Three Rivers Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited in constructing the parking lots for visitor use.

Jackson Creek Recreation Area Proposal

This two-phase proposal to construct an interpretive trail, campground, and amphitheater in the former Brown Circle area on the west side of Midewin was presented for public comment in December 1997. At the end of the scoping period, it was decided to postpone any further consideration of the project until the completion of the Land and Resource Management Plan.

Interim Trails Planning

Planning for a temporary trail system began in FY98 but has been deferred by the ground-disturbance moratorium (see Arsenal Cleanup). In addition, public safety and site security issues will need to be resolved before allowing public access to some areas of Midewin.

FY98 Accomplishments Report

Partnerships Summary

In addition to the Forest Service's fundamental partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Midewin operates in an unusually integrated manner with a wide variety of partners.

First, the local consensus for the establishment of the Prairie, signed into law on February 10, 1996, is truly impressive. Bipartisan sponsorship, handed from Democratic Congressman George Sangmeister to his Republican successor Jerry Weller, continues today throughout the Illinois delegation, including the local and state levels. The Joliet Arsenal Citizens' Planning Commission was composed of over 20 representatives of local interest groups, who balanced their individual interests into a plan for multiple uses of the former Arsenal and unified support for the Prairie component.

Today, Midewin is the largest open space – currently 15,000 acres, designed to grow to 19,000 – in the Prairie Parklands Partnership, a regional coalition of 22 other natural areas encompassing about 40,000 acres in northeastern Illinois.

Midewin is also a key component of Chicago Wilderness, a group that evolved from the Chicago Region Biodiversity Council to today's membership of over 70 agencies and organizations committed to the protection, preservation, and management of a thriving mosaic of about

200,000 acres of natural areas connected by greenways and wildlife corridors, embedded in the third largest metropolitan area in the country. Midewin hosted a Chicago Wilderness Restoration Roundtable in July 1998 on prairie restoration "management paradoxes" for about 50 professional biologists, botanists, and other scientists from federal, state, and county agencies, local universities, and The Nature Conservancy. Midewin was also featured as one of the "12 Natural Wonders of Chicago Wilderness" in a yearlong promotional campaign to draw audiences previously inexperienced in the outdoors. Midewin was featured in the high-quality campaign brochure and a 1999 calendar. In addition, Midewin is participating in the Mighty Acorns project (see Legislative Purposes 2), a rapidly expanding environmental education/stewardship program for urban youth.

The Midewin Corporate Council is made up of corporations and businesses in Chicago and the metro area that have chosen to take a leadership role to support the Prairie. These corporations have a stake in Midewin by virtue of owning land near Midewin, their corporate philanthropic goals focusing on conservation, or the strong interest of their customers or employees in Midewin. Companies represented on the Corporate council include Dow Chemical, Amoco, Mobil, Stepan, BASF, and StarCon. In addition to quarterly meetings at which Midewin planning status and issues are discussed, Council members have supported the Prairie through sponsoring employee workdays on site, funding volunteer activities, and purchasing restoration

materials. In October 1998 the Amoco facility in Channahon, Illinois donated a 64x24-foot trailer that will be moved to the Midewin Administrative Site and used for work space. A recent spectacular project has been Mobil's \$200,000 funding of an exhibit, along with associated public and educational events, at the Chicago Institute of Art. A retrospective of photographer Terry Evans' prairie work over the last nine years, "In Place of Prairie," features Midewin and opened to acclaim at the Art Institute on September 12, 1998. The exhibit will move on to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in 1999 to join a National Geographic exhibit on grasslands, before moving on to seven other national venues.

Midewin also enjoys the support and participation of hundreds of grassroots partners. The Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance began as a lobbying force for the establishing legislation, and today involves itself in every aspect of Midewin's management. They are most visibly active in supporting the many volunteers who provide most of the hands-on labor for prairie restoration work, through publishing a regular newsletter with volunteer calendars and articles, and providing a recognition picnic in the summer. And last, but far from least, are the hundreds of volunteers who run farm machinery to plow fields in the spring and mow fields in the summer, who plant rootstock in the spring and harvest seeds in the fall, who staff exhibits throughout the year at special events like the downtown Chicago Flower and Garden Show and several rural county fairs, who guided dozens of public tours on the Prairie this past summer, and who staff the office phones and maintain an outstanding website for Midewin (see the Volunteer Program summary later in this section).

Midewin could not have been born, would not be operating today, and will not achieve its mandate to restore thousands of acres of tallgrass prairie to our nation in the future without partners.

Conservation 2000 Grants

Conservation 2000 is Illinois' comprehensive, six-year, \$100 million initiative to address the natural resource needs of Illinois into the year 2000. Grants provide matching state funding to partnerships for natural resource protection and restoration projects. Midewin has benefited from a number of C2000 grants to the Forest Service and to partners during 1997 and 1998.

FY97 C2000 Grants

Applicant/Partner	Project	Funding	Status
Forest Service & Illinois DNR	Purchase of equipment for prescribed burning, prairie restoration and reconstruction, and establishment of native seed production nursery beds.	C2000 \$120,625 USFS \$63,500	Brush hog, rototiller, grass drill, and burn equipment purchased and used in FY97 and FY98.
Openlands Project	Revision and reprinting of Midewin "The Vision" brochure.	C2000 \$9,850	Revision in process, to be published in summer 1999.
Openlands Project	Preserve key parcels of land in the Prairie Parklands.	C2000 \$21,000	Prairie Parklands Partnership researched and then set the Parklands' boundaries in FY98; staff from Corlands and Openlands Project have identified key parcels of land within the Parklands and have initiated landowner contact to promote preservation; project work is ongoing.
The Conservation Fund	Prairie Parklands planning and consensus building, including development of GIS-based Decision Support Model software.	C2000 \$70,000	The Decision Support Model was completed in August 1998; training conducted; maps produced .

FY98 C2000 Grants

Applicant/Partner	Project	Funding	Status
Corlands/Openlands Project	Preservation and restoration to wetlands of a key 65-acre parcel of land within Midewin.	C2000 \$249,250	Acquisition in process, closing anticipated in June 1999.
Openlands Project	Streams and Watersheds of the Prairie Parklands Ecosystem: Management Actions for Protection and Enhancement.	C2000 \$62,000	A draft Citizens' Action Guide to protect and enhance water resources and wetlands within the 126-square-mile Midewin watershed has been developed and two tours taken to identify potential wetland restoration sites; a plan to stabilize 300 feet of eroding streambanks along Prairie Creek and install cattle fencing and solar-powered water well is in development for FY99 implementation..
University of St. Francis	Inventory and assessment of remnant-dependent jumping spiders of Midewin.	C2000 \$5,000	Quantitative sampling conducted in 1998 and a surprising diversity of jumping spiders were found. Illinois has about 68± species, found mostly in southern Illinois – half of these species were found at Midewin, including four remnant-dependent.
USFS, Will County Forest Preserve District, & The Field Museum	Para-professional training program for ecological monitoring.	C2000 \$7,000	Volunteers and agency staff will begin training in spring 1999 to monitor streams, butterflies, breeding birds, vegetation, and amphibians and reptiles.
USFS & Will County Forest Preserve District	Fire Training Academy	C2000 \$10,000	Training classes will be held in spring and fall 1999 in wildlands fire behavior, basic firefighting, smoke management, firefighting equipment

			use, and other topics.
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Volunteer Program

Midewin's volunteer program began in fall 1995 and has steadily expanded. Midewin volunteers contributed 3858.5 volunteer hours to the Prairie from September 1, 1997 to September 30, 1998. The deferral of ground-breaking activity resulted in the cancellation of Midewin's Passport in Time Project, cancellation of Midewin Trails Day, and a scaleback in volunteer workdays. In general, the deferral slowed the volunteer program's expansion.

However, despite the deferral, volunteer hours increased by 80% from the period covered by the last accomplishment report (September 1, 1996-August 31, 1997). The current accomplishment report describes a 13-month period, which is one reason why the increase in volunteer hours is so dramatic. Adjusting for similar 12-month accounting, volunteer hours have increased by 45%, still the largest increase in the program to date.

Volunteer Activity	Total Hours
Horticulture/Stewardship	1887.5
Outreach and Communication	680
Biological Monitoring and Field Work	617
Archaeology and Special Projects	664
TOTAL	3848.5

Volunteers were responsible for several major accomplishments this year. Among other achievements, volunteers planted about 16,000 plugs in the native seed production areas, co-led or led 17 tours, produced the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance's *Prairie Telegraph* newsletter, provided between 75-90% of the staffing at Mighty Acorns youth stewardship events, monitored birds, anurans, and streams, and maintained the Midewin Web page. Volunteer achievements are described in more detail below.

Horticulture/Stewardship

Horticulture volunteers planted plugs, collected seed, mulched beds, transplanted plants and trees, germinated seeds, watered plants, and helped search for endangered species this year. The horticulture program registered the greatest increase in volunteer hours of any volunteer category -- from 724 hours to 1698.5 hours, an increase of 135%.

Volunteers planted almost all of the plugs that were installed in the native seed production areas in 1998. As a result of the temporary deferral of ground-breaking activity, Midewin's planting season was only seven weeks, instead of four months. Since the deferral of ground-breaking activities was lifted at the seed beds in mid-August, Midewin's summer crews were unable to plant much before they finished their

employment. Therefore, volunteers planted almost everything that was installed in the seed beds this year. Volunteers planted approximately 3500 linear feet of seed beds with about 16,000 plugs, representing twenty-one native plant species. Compared to last year, volunteers planted 75% more linear feet, and 38% fewer plants. The reason volunteers planted fewer plugs but more linear feet is because staff decided to increase spacing between plants in the seed production beds.

In other highlights of the horticulture/stewardship volunteer program:

- ☞ Volunteers helped to keep approximately \$150,000 worth of plant material alive in flats and pots during the temporary deferral of ground-breaking activity.
- ☞ Volunteers collected seed from more than 20 native plant species.
- ☞ USFS and IDNR staff initiated regular weekday workdays. Volunteers contributed more than two hundred fifty hours and completed several projects, such as seed collecting from wild areas and sowing seed in a newly-tilled seed production field.

Outreach and Communication

Volunteers continued to play key roles in Midewin's education and outreach mission. Volunteers produced the Midewin Alliance's volunteer newsletter, updated and maintained the Midewin Web page, and staffed Midewin's Road Show. Midewin's staff was able to resume the public tour program and initiate a youth stewardship program, because volunteers stepped forward to help with these projects.

The number of volunteer hours in this category decreased by 24% from the last accomplishment report, but volunteers continued contributing to all existing volunteer programs, and began work in the public tour and youth stewardship programs. Volunteer hours decreased primarily because fewer volunteers assisted with the Chicago Flower and Garden Show and with office and clerical work. New volunteer opportunities, such as leading tours and youth stewardship trips, began late in the fiscal year.

Midewin's public tour program resumed in June 1998. Tours were designed to prepare participants to become involved with Midewin's planning process. Most tours took place with both volunteers and staff, but volunteers also began to lead tours independently. From June 27-September 30, 1998, volunteers led or co-led 17 tours, educating more than 370 persons about Midewin and the planning process.

Volunteers were also vital to the Mighty Acorns youth stewardship program, described under "Legislative Purposes 2" of this report. Beginning in autumn 1998, Midewin became part of the Mighty Acorns expansion program. Many Mighty Acorns field trips involve visits by 90-100 students at a time, and require the presence of 10-12 Midewin volunteers and staff. It would be extremely difficult to carry out this program without volunteer program leaders, who usually contribute between 75%-90% of the staffing at

Mighty Acorns events.

In addition to these new programs, Midewin volunteers continued to accomplish a great deal in continuing programs and projects.

- Volunteer editor Jane Jones, along with a team of volunteers, produced the Midewin Alliance's volunteer newsletter every two months. The newsletter reaches all volunteers and several Midewin partner organizations.
- Volunteer Wendy Liles, a professional Web consultant, continued to improve the Web page. She updated and expanded several different sections of the page.
- Midewin volunteers helped staff the Midewin exhibit at the Chicago Flower and Garden Show, the Will and Kankakee County Fairs, the Illinois State Fair, Will County Earth Day, and other community events.

Biological Monitoring and Field Work

Volunteers became involved in many more ecological monitoring programs at Midewin. In addition to monitoring, volunteers helped to improve grassland bird habitat and control exotic plant species. Highlights of this year's program are listed below.

Volunteers donated 617 hours to monitoring and field projects during this fiscal year, a 17% increase from the last accomplishment report. However, more than 90% of this category's hours in the last accomplishment report were devoted to volunteer burn training. In the course of this fiscal year, volunteers spent less time in training and much more time in the field, working.

- USFS and IDNR staff trained volunteers as frog and toad monitors for the first time. After training, volunteer monitors spent a total of 60 hours assisting with anuran surveys. Volunteers did not encounter any species new to Midewin, but helped to document presence or absence of different anurans at sites within the Prairie.
- Three experienced birders conducted breeding bird surveys as part of a volunteer bird monitoring pilot program. Birders also helped with Midewin's spring bird count.
- In conjunction with the IDNR's RiverWatch program, volunteers monitored the health of Midewin's streams during May and June 1998.
- More Midewin volunteers completed RiverWatch monitoring training. Six Midewin volunteers completed a more advanced volunteer StreamLeaders training.
- Over the course of three summer workdays, volunteers worked for 228 hours to improve habitat for grassland birds. They removed more than two miles of old barbed wire fencing and installed about one mile of new electric fence.
- Seven experienced volunteers were certified as farm equipment operators. These volunteers mowed several of Midewin's fields to control invasive plant species.
- The IDNR Conservation 2000 program funded a grant request by Midewin staff to train volunteer ecological monitors at sites within the Prairie Parklands. Staff from

Midewin and the Forest Preserve District of Will County are spearheading the project. As a result of the project, expanded amphibian and reptile, bird and stream monitoring programs at Midewin are planned for next year, along with pilot volunteer programs in vegetation monitoring and butterfly monitoring.

Special Projects

Volunteers assisted staff from Midewin and the Shawnee National Forest during a week-long Passport in Time archaeology project in September 1997. More Passport in Time projects are planned for coming years. Volunteers also helped with special projects this year. Volunteers built workday signs, installed hunting blinds, called other volunteers to increase workday attendance, conducted literature searches, improved access to the River Road native seed production nursery, and researched the history of Midewin.

Summary

Volunteers are key to achieving Midewin's mission. Many Midewin programs, such as youth stewardship field trips, would not be possible without the skills and contributions of trained Midewin volunteers. This year, volunteers worked in several new positions -- as youth stewardship trip leaders, bird monitors, farm equipment operators, frog and toad monitors, and archaeology assistants. At the same time, volunteers continued to make significant contributions as horticulture volunteers, tour guides, Road Show outreach staffers, and more. The 1998 Midewin Volunteer Roll of Honor, following these pages, lists the many individuals and groups who deserve thanks for their contributions.

As the program grows each year, more volunteers are stepping into leadership roles and supporting a wider variety of Midewin activities and programs. Partner organizations, such as the Openlands Project and the IDNR EcoWatch program, are helping to train Midewin volunteers. Our long-term goal is to create a strong volunteer program that will support every aspect of Midewin's mission and will provide a model for other interagency volunteer programs.

Midewin Volunteer Roll of Honor

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie thanks the more than 300 volunteers who made the accomplishments of this year possible. Please note that this Roll of Honor only covers the period from September 1, 1997 through September 30, 1998 and does not include the countless hours contributed by members of the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance and other partner organizations.

Up to 10 hours

Chris Adamson•Toby Adamson•Stuart Adamson•Joyce Anderson•Gilbert Anderson•
Steve Ashby•Robert Bahr•Stephen Baker•Nick Baldo•Peter Baldo•Regina Bauer•David Beata•
Gina Beata•Collis Bell•Willie Bell•Jennifer Benedict•Jim Berggren•Patricia Berggren•
Donna Betz•Robert Bezouska•Mary Blunk•Bastiaan Bouma•Joan Bozyck•Mike Brand•
Sister Brown•Eileen Bunker•Vince Caron•Kate Chappell•Chuck Cheesman•Ryan Chew•
Diane Chromek•Carmelita Collins•Sister Colton•Kevin Colvin•Veronica Comerford•Josh
Cook•Karen Cook•Matthew Cook•James Cunningham •Kathleen Czernik•Marcia
Dabrowski•Michael Davis•Sue Delost•Anne Desmond•
Dennis Desmond•Sharon Donato•Ed Doty•Sally Drauden•Bonnie Dulny•Dennis Dulny•
Jon Dvorak•Lee Ecker•Francis Fee•Charlie Fischer•Heather Fischer•Anita Flassig•
Robert Flassig•Jill Floushouse•Jane Fousler•Dorothy Gass•Barbara Gomora•Shonte
Gougis•Sally Hajek•Shana Halajian•Wanda Hanuska•MaryBeth Harmon •Eric Harrold•
Allison Hedden•Sister Hemming•John Hilsenhoff•Lee Hollenbeck•Dennis Howe•
Louise Huffman•Chris Hughes•Janet Hunt•Dorothy Hursh•Cindy Johnson•Glenn Johnson•
Clay Johnston•Sarah Johnston•Jane Jontz•Ann Jurkowski•Anne Kane•Erin Kane•
Janice Kane•Mary Kate Kane•Ursula Karaskiewicz•Bob Kelliher•Marion Kelliher•
Sylvia Kellogg•Bill Kinsella•Paul Kinsella•Robert Kolkebeck•Bernie Kopera•
George Kossuth•Kathy Kozacky•Christine Kuhn•Gayle Kurowski•Kent Lawson•
Shirley Lawrisuk•Chris Leach•Mike Leach•Elizabeth Lewis•Nancy Lindsay•Brandon Linn•
Doug Linn•Barbara Logan•John Logan•Diane Lotta•Evelyn Luciano•Don Malinowski•
Richard Markeloff•Kathryn McAlarney•Mary McCormack•Scott McCreary•
Vivian McDermott•Ed McGlynn•Marty Melody• Liz Meyer•Ken Meyers•
John Misak•Patricia Milton•LeeAnn Mitchell•Wendell Mitchell•Bob Moffitt•Cassandra Moran•
Chuck Morgan•Tom Mosier•Andrea Mourning•Karen Mraz•Carmen Mugnolo•Cheryl Nash•
Andy Neill•Debra Nelson•Andy Nugent•Ben Nugent•Dan Nugent•Patricia Nugent•
Stephanie Nugent•Chris Oszak•Jerome Panzer•Arnold Parus•Art Pearson•Peggy Pershey•
Grant Peterson•James Peterson•Deb Peters•Deb Petro•Ginger Phillips•Virginia Piekarski•
Edward Pollack•Geoff Prairie•Lisa Prasad•Charlie Rogers•Norm Rogers•Mark Santangelo•
Robert Satterlee•Carol Saunders•Pam Scarpa•Barry Schedin•Linda Schedin•Judy Schulz•
Steve Schulz•Clark Sells•Pat Sells•Donna Shehane•Tara Short•Vicki Sindelar•Caroline Siuta•
Ellen Siuta•Matt Siuta•Mike Siuta•Annie Slivinski•Mary Spangler•Phil Stewart•Jerry Strick•
Larry Stritch•Alice Stuhlmacher•Jim Stuhlmacher•Anna Stuhlmacher•Michelle Stuhlmacher•
Mike Szyska•Richard Thomas•Ryan Tipton•Rick Tomaleciwz•Bill Tobin•Jennifer Tobin•
Alta Turner•Joe Urbalis•Kim Vogen•Steve Volkening•Richard Wachenheim•Pat Wagner•
Roger Wagner•Chuck Walles•Christopher Walles•Gerry Werber•Carol White•Diane Willis•

Herman Wisslead•Dick Wunderlich•Marty Wyland•Allyn Zeman•Tony Zoars

Up to 25 hours

Greg Allen•Steve Anderson•John Baxter•Katherine Blair•Gene Bondar•Bill Bromer•
Franz Burnier•Tom Burroughs•Pat Campbell•Aletha Collins•Bill Cooper•Jean Dunkerley•
Sally Fisher-Planic•Sister Gardner•Gerry General•Eileen Grosso•Bethany Hansen• Rachel Herr•
LeAnn Hibler •Tim Jack•Jon Kiesa•Jan Kozol•Tyson Lagoni•Kurt Lamping•John Lesnak•
Terry Lesnak•Arne Lindberg•Margaret Lindsley•Sandi Livot-Kiesa•Bonnie Major•Tony
Majszak•

Neil McDermott•Ann Michaels•Michael Modesto•Sharon Moyer•David Mulconrey•
Art O'Shaugnessey• Pat Pavnica•Nancy Petritis•John Reddy• Art Rohr•Jorge Santiago•
Joe Srsnick•John Steinbach•Karin Steinbach•Kathleen Vogt•Mary Walsh•Rita Walters•
Chester Wilhelmi•Fred Wood•Janet Wright•Ray Wronkiewicz•Gina Wysocki•Sherry Zoars

Up to 50 hours

Nancy Bresnahan •Rondi Collette•Lee Hanson•Rich Hickson•Bob Jones•Jane Jones•Holly
Kapitan•

Sue Kenney•Carol LeClaire•Larry Lottino•Ann Matravers•Anne McAlvey•Gary McAlvey•
Bill McCandless•Kay McClelland•Patsy Mortimer•Beverly Reddy•Gordon Reddy•Jennifer
Reddy•

Mike Rzepka•Julie Sacco•Wayne Smith•Wayne Wagner•Ken Winter•Marge Winter

Up to 100 hours

Connie Heinrich•Jerry Heinrich•Barbara Kitz•Georgia Lynn•Don Nelson•Espie Nelson•Mark
Norem

More than 100 hours

Wendy Liles•Mobil Corporation•Miller Park Zookeepers, Peoria Illinois• Eagle Scout Andrew
Coon and BSA Troop 18 of Joliet •Eagle Scout Peter McFerrin and BSA Troop 175 of Morris

FY98 Accomplishments Report

Team Midewin

Administrative Site

Staff at Midewin continue to work out of the renovated brick farmhouse along Illinois Route 53. Quarters became tight as the Prairie geared up for developing the Land and Resource Management Plan, so an additional facility was rented in downtown Wilmington to house the planning, recreation, and engineering staff.

The 11-acre compound along Highway 53 has been fenced. Ground-disturbing work was postponed over the summer, but surveying of the site for future development was completed in March by the Chequamegon National Forest surveying crew. The final drawings for the new administrative building were completed. A contract for a steel-sided building to house Midewin's tractors and farming equipment was advertised.

Team Midewin Staff

Midewin is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and hundreds of contributing agencies, individuals, and organizations. The people listed below worked at Midewin on a year-round basis in FY98 and were responsible for administering programs to create the prairie envisioned by the establishing legislation.

Kent Austin, Prairie Supervisor, Forest Service
Portia Blume, Volunteer Coordinator, Illinois DNR
Jeff Cowie, Recreation Technician, Forest Service
Karen Fonte, Recreation Planner, Will County Forest Preserve District
Bill Glass, Eco-Team Leader and District Heritage Biologist, Illinois DNR
Fran Hundt, Business Management Clerk, Forest Service
Jean Keenan, Engineering Technician, Forest Service
Betty Kuckie, Office Support, Forest Service
Jerry Larson, Recreation Forester, Forest Service
Jesse Lovelace, Forestry Technician, Forest Service
Jeff Martina, Forestry Technician, Forest Service
Joe Miller, Computer/GIS Specialist, Forest Service
Brenda Molano-Flores, Prairie Ecologist, Illinois Natural History Survey
Karen Nash, Planning Team Leader, Forest Service
Gloria Pellin, Support Services Specialist, Forest Service
Mike Redmer, Biological Resident, Illinois DNR
Brian Reilly, Nature Preserves Specialist, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
Bryan Roemeling, Law Enforcement Officer, Forest Service
Linda Sasamoto, Computer Coordinator, Forest Service
Rick Short, Landscape Architect, Forest Service

Kris Smith, Engineer, Forest Service
Pat Thrasher, Interpretive Specialist, Forest Service
Eric Ulaszek, Horticulturist, Forest Service
Pat Welch, Recreation Planner, Forest Service
Chris Whelan, Avian Ecologist, Illinois Natural History Survey
Cindy Wills, Office Support, Illinois DNR
Marta Witt, Public Affairs Officer, Forest Service